



**design**

**Visual Literacy & Graphic Design:  
Foreign & Familiar  
Studio Arts Center International  
Florence, Italy  
26 June – 26 July 2008**

**FIRENZA**

## Visual Literacy & Graphic Design: Foreign & Familiar

Studio Arts Center International, Florence, Italy

26 June – 26 July 2008

Instructor: Joshua Singer

Website: <http://ad.sjsu.edu/~jsinger/saci>

### CLASS OVERVIEW

Increasingly, the contemporary role of the graphic designer includes not simply that of form-giver but also problem-solver. Consequently designers need the ability to creatively examine complex issues. The content and information that is developed from these examinations must be given form, often across multiple media platforms.

This class, through the examination of an unfamiliar, yet historically rich and artistic terrain, will utilize design and design research methods ultimately creating a series of design “documents”. Through class projects students will approach design as an interdisciplinary act grounded in the history and traditions of the arts, both classic and experimental. We will explore the process of design simultaneously developing the personal voice of the designer within the cultural richness, history and beauty of Florence. Students will work in both print and digital media. Florence, both historical and contemporary, it’s characteristics both unique and mundane, will set the stage for this interdisciplinary approach, especially as it pertains to visual communication.

Students receive three credits for the class and registration in the SACI Summer Program entitles students to a second class, also of three credits. SACI is a directly accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) Credit is transferable to students’ home institution upon approval by the student’s home institution. In most cases, this class fulfills an art and/or design elective.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1 -

**Project:** Conceptual map.

**Topics:** Research, exploration & documentation

**Techniques:** Digital photography, information graphics. Illustrator.

**Readings:** Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography, Theory of the Dérive & Formulary for a New Urbanism, Guy Debord, The Baseball Project, Hugh Dubberly.

**Day 1.** Introduction of syllabus, discussion of objectives. Introduction of first project and readings: Mapping and concept mapping techniques. Florence dérive (documentation and collection). Consider environment, experience, institution, activity, place from collections and observations of Firenze.

**Day 2.** Discussion: Readings and project. Studio: Create a conceptual map of a topic derived from the dérive and it's documentation. Mid-day group critique.

### Week 2 -

**Project:** Booklet. Minimum size: A4, 12 pages. Content/comcept based on findings of project 1.

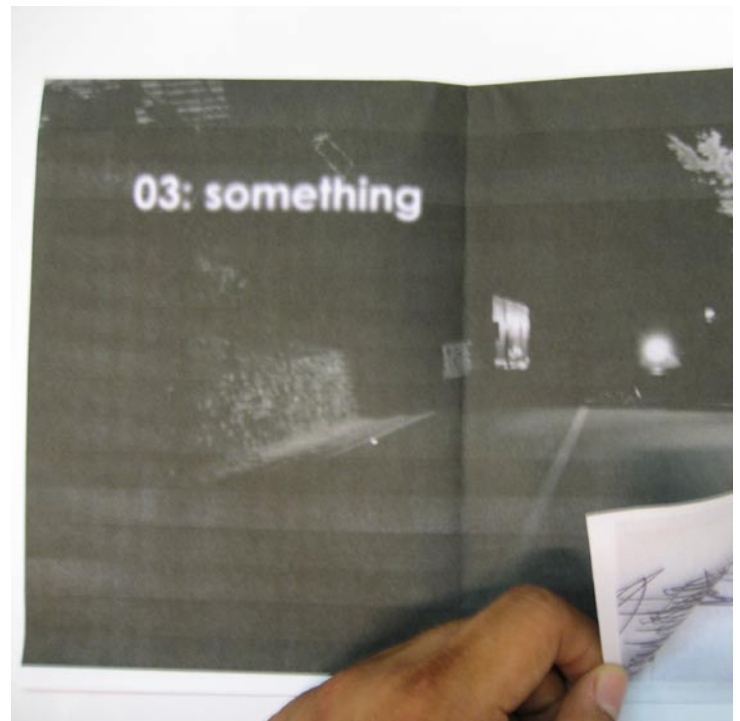
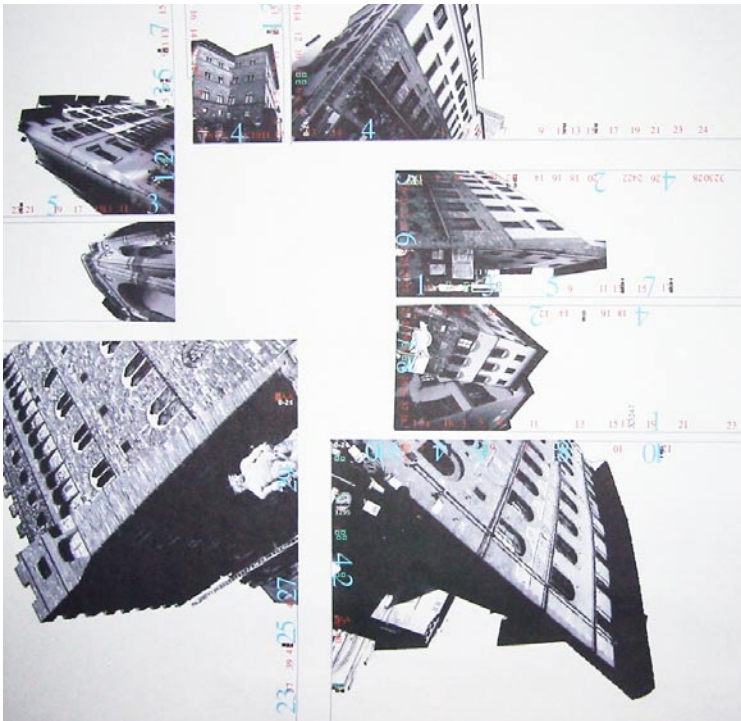
**Topics:** Words, image, structure.

**Techniques:** Typography, image editing, linear narrative. Indesign.

**Readings:** Understanding Comics, Scott McCloud

**Day 1.** Discussion: presentations and critique of completed Project 1. Introduction of Project 2 and discuss readings. Studio: Concepting and rough preliminary designs for spreads.

**Day 2:** Discussion: Group critique of work. Studio: Develop and refine spreads.



### **Week 3 -**

**Project:** Video. 60-120 seconds, 720x480 -or- 640x480, 10mb (max). Must contain image, text and sound.

**Topics:** time, sound and motion.

**Techniques:** Storyboarding and editing. iMovie, Garageband.

**Readings:** Storyboarding and editing techniques.

**Day 1:** Discussion: presentations and critique of completed Project 2. Studio: Break into groups: concepting based on combined student projects (1-2). Gather raw video footage.

**Day 2:** Discussion: group presentations of project concept. Demonstration: editing in iMovie. Studio: Edit raw footage. Mid-day critique of project work.

### **Week 4 -**

**Project:** Create a "publication" based concept based on work and investigations thus far. Must be created and distributed.

**Topics:** Publication and its distribution: media, multiple channels and making it real.

**Techniques:** misc.

**Day 1:** Discussion: Presentation and critique of project 3. Discuss readings. Introduction of project 4. Concept and work in class.

**Day 2:** Discussion: critique of work. Studio: Complete, distribute and document.

Exhibition of work and screening of videos in auditorium during SACI's closing party.

### **MATERIALS & TOOLS**

- Digital camera (minimum 2 mega pixels)
- Sketchbook, pencils, pens, etc..
- Optional but recommended, video camera or digital camera capable of recording video.



**Instructor Bio**

Josh Singer is a graphic designer, artist, teacher (and occasional writer) residing in Oakland California. His professional design practice - [atomtan.com](http://atomtan.com) - works with arts and non-profit clients producing work in print and digital media. He also produces independent experimental and research driven projects which address issues of media, history, mythology and epistemology. He currently teaches in the Graphic Design Department at San Jose State University. He has exhibited in the U.S. and Europe. Recent publications include "19 Days in Holland: A Study in Dutch Design," CMYK Magazine and "Olam Kattan: The Cycling Jew," Orange Juice Magazine (the Netherlands). He has an BA from Hampshire College, an MFA in Fine Art from Hunter College, C.U.N.Y. and an MFA in Design from California College of the Arts.

